COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

Vol. VII. No. 10.] LONDON, SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1805. [Price 10d.

"As it would have required but a moderate share of prudence, when we first began this practice of "mortgaging, to have foretold, from the nature of men and of ministers, that things would necessarily be "carried to the length we see; so now, that they have, at last, happily reached it, it may not be difficult "to guess at the consequence. It must, indeed, be one of these two events: either the nation must destroy "public credit, or public credit will destroy the nation."——Hume, Essay on Public Credit.

PUBLIC PAPER.

France and Genoa.——*Abstract of a Convention concluded by the French Minister, Sallicetti, with the Ligurian Republic, in the name of the Emperor Napoleon, signed on the 20th of October last.*

The Emperor Napoleon engages to procure a Peace for the Ligurian Republic with the Barbary Powers, and to cause the Ligurian flag to be respected by those powers.—Should he, however, not be so successful in this endeavour as he expects to be, he engages to furnish the ships of the said Republic with French colours, that they may thus be protected.—The Emperor of the French will further grant permission for the importation of all Ligurian commodities into Piedmont, Parma, and Placenza, only paying the small importation-toll, which was before customary, which shall begin to be in force immediately after the ratification of this convention.—On the other part, the Government of the Ligurian Republic engages to furnish 6,000 seamen, during the present war, and to have 4,000 of them in readiness in a short time.—The Ligurian Republic cedes the harbours, with the arsenal, as also the galley harbours and the dock yard, with the basin, and places them at the disposal of the French; and as it is intended to build in the said dock-yard ten ships of the line for France, the Ligurian Republic engages to enlarge the basin sufficiently for the entrance and stationing of these ships at its own expense; and as at the time of the conclusion of this convention a new built ship of the line, a frigate, and two corvettes are lying finished in the dock of Genoa, these ships shall likewise be placed at the disposal of France.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPER.

Antigua.—*By His Excellency the Right Hon. Ralph Lord Lavington, Baron of Lavington, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Captain-General and Governor in Chief in and over all His Majesty's Leeward Charibbee Islands in America, Chancellor, Vice-Admiral and Ordinary of the same, &c.—A Proclamation.*

The Earl Camden, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, having, in consequence of a Report of the Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations, communicated to me the Royal pleasure, that I should not open any of the Ports of any of the Islands over which I preside, for the admission of articles from the American States, which are not allowed to be imported by law, except in cases of real and very great necessity.—I issue this my Proclamation, notifying and declaring, that under the regulation and authority of an Act passed in the twenty-eighth year of His Majesty's reign, and intitled, "An Act for Regulating the Trade between the subjects of His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in North America, and in the West India Islands, and the countries belonging to the United States of America; and between His Majesty's said Subjects and the Foreign Islands in the West Indies;" I admit in the different Ports of the several Islands under my command, the importation of the following articles, viz. tobacco, pitch, tar, turpentine, hemp, flax, masts, yards, bowsprits, staves, heading, boards, timber, shingles, and lumber of any sort; horses, neat cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry, and live stock of any sort; bread, biscuit, flour, pease, beans, potatoes, wheat, rice, oats, barley, and grain of any sort; such commodities respectively being the growth or production of any of the Territories of the said United States of America. But whereas, in the first Section of the Act of the General Council and Assembly of the Leeward Islands, passed in April 1798, and intitled, "An Act more effectually to provide for the support, and extend certain Regulations for the Protection of Slaves, to promote and encourage their increase, and generally to ameliorate their condition."—It is enacted and ordained, that every Owner or Director of any Slave or Slaves within the Leeward Islands, shall weekly, and every week, under the penalty of ten shillings per head, for each and every Slave under his or her direction, for every omission, purchase or provide for every said Slave or Slaves, among divers other kinds of provisions, one pound and one quarter of herrings, shads, or mackarel, or other sub-

stitutes for herrings, shads, or mackarel, the provision of which substitutes is altogether unattainable in any of the Leeward Islands. And whereas, from various causes in time of war, the expectation of the smallest degree of supply of herrings, shads or mackarel, from the British colonies in North America, is a perfectly hopeless speculation, and the most favourable supply of them, which, from long and uniform experience can be annually expected from any of the ports of the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland, is found to be much too precarious, and infinitely too irregular in every respect, but particularly in the periods of their arrival, to answer the constant and unremitting demands of the plantations in the Leward Islands; and whereas, the sudden privation of these last mentioned articles, not only may create the greatest inconvenience, and produce the most pernicious consequences in the said colonies, but must inevitably disable every owner or director of slave or slaves in them from fulfilling the duty imposed on him or her by the first section of the before-mentioned act for meliorating the condition of the slaves in the Leeward Islands;—Now conceiving the immediate case to be one of those of "real and very "great necessity," which demands my exercise of the discretionary power lodged in me on such occasions, I hereby notify, that over and above the articles specified in the before-mentioned act passed in the 28th year of His Majesty's reign, and already described in this proclamation, I likewise permit the importation from the American States into the ports of the islands in my government, of herrings, shads, mackarel, and all sorts of pickled and salted fish, for the space of six calendar months, to be computed from the date of this proclamation; by the expiration of which period some means may be devised by which His Majesty's Leeward Islands may be supplied with the said articles from ports of His Majesty's own dominions, or I may receive His Majesty's further commands on this subject.——Provided that no importations of any kind be made from the states of America on more favourable terms, as to duties on entry, than on similar importations from the British colonies in North America, where such duties are due and payable: whereof all persons concerned are to take notice, and govern themselves accordingly.——Given under my hand and seal at arms, at the Government-house at Antigua, this 29th day of November, in the year of our Lord, 1804, and in the 45th year of His Majesty's reign.——God save the King. ——LAVINGTON.

MILITARY SYSTEM.

SIR,——You have lately written so much, and so well, respecting the British Army, that, perhaps, little more need, or can, be said on the subject. The recruiting, however, is a matter of such moment, that you, probably, will not object to admitting a few observations on it.——I have lately had an opportunity of seeing great exertions made to obtain men for rank, and where no expense has been spared, and I am decidedly of opinion, that the great objection is to becoming soldiers *for life*. Men who have the highest value for liberty, (the birthright of Englishmen) do not, be assured, like to pawn it even for a very large sum; and, that becoming soldiers, has always been considered as pawning it, I believe, no man will deny. As a remedy to this objection, then, the enrolling men for limited time of service, at once presents itself; and surely a method employed, in some of those continental armies, the most esteemed, and certainly best disciplined, should not hastily be rejected. In addition to the limitation of service, as a further inducement, it appears to me, that it would be advantageous, that after the time of service has expired, each soldier should be allowed a daily pay, which joined to what he might earn by his labour, would render the remainder of his days comfortable, and which, at the same time, should be considered as a retainer for his services at home, if wanted. This would, I imagine, at once put a stop to the desertion, at present, I am sorry to say, so alarmingly prevalent, by not only insuring a man his discharge at a certain time, but holding out to him a permanent pecuniary reward for remaining until that time. I cannot speak correctly as to the average time of service throughout the army; but, from the frequency of desertion within the last 10 years, I imagine more men have, in this manner, quitted it, than have remained beyond that time. If I am right in this conjecture, and supposing the plan I have mentioned to put a stop to desertion, (by limiting the first engagement to 10 years) the country would be benefited in proportion to the number of men gained annually by recruiting, more than are gained at present.——I would therefore propose, that a man should be enlisted for 10 years; that after this period he should be entitled to his discharge, and six pence per day for life: but as he will not, probably, be worn out after this time, should

he chuse to engage for a further period, I would offer him a small bounty, and after 3, 5, 7, or 10 years more, as he might agree for, or his constitution admit, he should again be entitled to his discharge, and a further advance of his allowance for life, in proportion to the length of his service; so that after 20 years service, he should have a shilling a day. An advance of three halfpence at each of the periods I have stated would perhaps do; so that after having served 13 years he should be entitled to seven pence halfpenny, and so on in proportion. I must here beg, that in these calculations, &c. you would not fancy I speak as of a regularly digested plan; I merely submit hints that might serve on which to ground one. I am aware, that the system I have laid down may, at first, appear an expensive one, from the number of men who, after a certain time, would be entitled to the different allowances: but it must be considered, that in proportion to the number of men thus pensioned, will be the number of men of other descriptions of force required for home service: and supposing even that a large number live to an age which should render them incapable of service, so much the stronger claim have they on a liberal public (whom in their youth they have faithfully served) for a maintenance in their old age. Another objection has been held to limited service, that is, the diminution which may take place in an army, from many men being entitled to their discharge when they are on foreign service, and when they are wanted: but those who urge this must be very little acquainted with the character or spirit of the British soldier, who was never yet known to shrink from danger, when required to face it. Under such circumstances, whilst they existed, he would most chearfully stand by his country, his comrades, and his colours. That in removing the enlisting for life you remove the grand impediment to the recruiting of the army, I have not the slightest doubt; that the granting greater privileges and advantages, and removing some of the present difficulties under which soldiers labour, would also tend to facilitate recruiting, there is every reason to suppose. I do not, however, agree with Mr. Windham, [*I* do] in thinking that allowing serjeants to kill game would at all benefit it. At all events, it would not tend to improve discipline. Perhaps the giving the soldier (his service ended) a vote, might be to many an inducement to enlist. — As I have mentioned privileges and advantages I cannot avoid saying a few words respecting the officers' pay. (The soldier, in this respect, is well off;) and I scarcely dare say much, least I should appear interested: but *I will venture to assert*, that no officer, of a rank inferior to that of captain, can in England live at his regimental mess on his pay: in fact, he can barely exist. And is this the situation to which the members of the proudest profession should be reduced? It seems universally allowed, that *throughout all ranks* an increase of pay is necessary, to place officers in that situation in society, which it was intended they should hold, when first the present rates of pay were established. —I am aware, that in saying this and what follows, I in some measure appear to depart from my original intention of speaking only as to the recruiting of the army: but still I cannot help feeling, that what tends to make the army more respectable, must tend to increase it; and *vice versâ*.——The liberal hand with which military titles have lately been scattered, certainly diminishes the consequence of those, who, after serving 20 years in all climates, think themselves fortunate in arriving at the rank of a field officer; for it certainly is a grating thing to such a man, on his return to England, if called upon to act in defence of his native country, to find himself commanded by his grocer, his mercer, or his attorney: and many of these gentlemen, I am well assured, hold lieutenant-colonels' commissions; indeed, I have heard, this liberal distribution of rank stated as a reason, why the country gentlemen have not so generally stepped forward to volunteer their services. If then they feel it, in how much greater a degree must he feel it, who owes alone to his merit and his length of service the situation he enjoys? and in how much is the high value of that situation diminished, from the frequent occurrence of lieutenant-colonels, majors, and captains of volunteers? —I am, Sir, your's, &c.——A FIELD OFFICER.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

SINKING FUND (continued from 352, to which the reader is requested to refer.) In America, they pursue a different course. They have measures for *reducing* their debt; *really* reducing it; and they are reducing it accordingly. When Mr. Gallatin tells the Congress (as in the report before mentioned see p. 325), that there is an "annual appropriation of 8 millions of dollars for the "payment of the principal and interest of "the public debt," he tells them, at the same time, that 3,700,000 of those dollars are to be "applied to the *redemption* of the "*principal*;" that is, to the *real* redemption

of the principal; to the *discharge* of it; to the *paying of the holders for it*; to the *taking of it up and destroying it*. It is truly a shame to employ so many different phrases to express what is equally well expressed in one word, in the word *redeem* only; but, the fault is not mine; that word, as well as all others of nearly the same signification, have been so abused, their meaning has been so perverted; they are become so equivocal, in consequence of the use that has been made of them with regard to the Pitt sinking fund, that they are, upon subjects of this sort, no longer capable of filling their former places, or of performing their proper functions.—— The Americans do, I say, *really* reduce their national debt. They raise a sum of money in taxes annually, and they *redeem* with it as much stock as it will purchase. *Really* redeem it. They buy it, pay for it, take the evidences of it from the individual holders, they throw those evidences in the fire; that which they have so redeemed is no longer in existence, and, of course, they *no longer pay interest upon it*. This is *redeeming*; but, can we be said to *redeem*; we, who *continue to pay interest upon all the stock*, just the same as if we had no sinking fund?——But, the fact is, that the original intention of our sinking fund, as expressed in the act of parliament, by which it was established, and which was passed in the year 1786, was, somewhat similar to the plan pursued in America. Not so good, indeed; but, in principle, bearing some analogy to it. It provided for the redeeming, I mean (good reader, have patience with me!) I mean *real* redeeming, of a portion of the debt, when the annual income of the fund should amount to 4 millions. It did not, like the American plan, raise a sum of money every year, lay it out in stock, destroy the stock, and take from the taxes the amount of the interest before wanted for the said stock. It was not so simple, satisfactory and efficient as this plan; but, it afforded some foundation for a rational hope that an alleviation of burdens would arise from it. The commissioners, to whom was to be entrusted the management of it, were to keep it accumulating, till the interest upon it, or, in other words, the amount annually paid by the people on account of it, should amount to 4 millions. Then it was to *cease accumulating*, and its 4 millions a year were thenceforth to be applied to the *real* redeeming of the debt; that is to say to the purchasing of stock, upon which stock *interest was no longer to be paid by the people*. The words of the act, as touching this point, are "the *dividends*" [that is the quarterly interest] "due on "such parts of the principal stock, as shall "*thenceforth* be paid off by the said commis- "sioners, shall *no longer be issued at the Ex-* "*chequer*, but shall be considered as *redeem-* "*ed* by parliament." Yes; that would have been *real* redeeming; but, if such an effect was required in order to justify the application of the word *redeem*, with what propriety do the ministers now apply that word to the effect of the sinking fund, which effect, in consequence of subsequent alterations in the plan of the sinking fund, and particularly the last that was made, never can, according even to the calculations of the ministers themselves, take place till about *forty or fifty years* hence? What front, then, does it require; what a reliance on the forbearance or ignorance or impotence or servility of others does it require to enable the advocates for the act of 1786 now to speak of, and to state in writing, as stock *redeemed*, that stock upon which *the dividends* (that is to say, the interest) *are still issued at the Exchequer!*— The great alteration, or rather the total abandonment, of the original plan of our sinking fund, took place in the year 1802, and in the act which was passed on the 22d of June in that year, that is, stat. 42 of the King, c. 72, wherein the former act, as far as related to the real redeeming provision was repealed; and the stock purchased, and to be purchased, by the commissioners was made to remain *unredeemed*, the interest still being to be paid on it, as it now is. The merit of the original plan was questionable. It was, I think, pretty evident, that, unless we began to *extinguish at once*, as the Americans did, we never could do it afterwards; and, that which might have been foreseen has now proved to be the case. The sums paid quarterly from the Exchequer into the hands of the commissioners, answers no other end than that of keeping up the price of the funds, by creating a demand for stock, a considerable purchase of which the commissioners are, by law, obliged to make *every week*. So that, in fact, the 6 millions a year, which Mr. Pitt tells us the sinking fund *produces*, is, so much money raised yearly in taxes, for the purpose of enabling the minister to make such purchases in the stock market as shall prevent the commodity from falling to a degree that would blow up the system; upon exactly the same principle that the old woman sent her daughter on before her to market with money to buy up other people's eggs, in order to keep up the price of those that she was about to bring in her basket —— The difference in the American sinking fund and that of Mr. Pitt is fully shown in their different effects. The

American general government began, in 1789-90 with a debt of 70 millions of dollars. The sum annually required for interests and charges was about 3,300,000 dollars; and such their annual charge on account of debt remains to this day. But, observe, that they have, during the 14 years, made *new loans* to the amount of about 40 millions of dollars; so that, it appears, that they have, during the 14 years, actually redeemed, extinguished, and destroyed, about 40 millions of debt. They borrowed money for the armament against France; for that against Algiers and Tripoli; and, lately, to the amount of 13 millions of dollars for the purchase of Louisiana, for which 13 millions they have, of course, value received. Yet, their annual charge on account of debt has been kept down to what it originally was, by means of the sums which they have so judiciously appropriated for reducing the *principal* of that debt. But, what have we done? We too, have been making new loans; but, have we *paid off*, have we *extinguished*, have we *destroyed* any part of the *principal* of the debt? Not a single pound's worth of it. We still pay interest upon the whole of the stock that was in existence in 1786 and also upon the whole of the stock that has been created since that time. In 1786, the total capital of the debt was 259 millions, and the annual interest and charges amounted to 9 millions. At December, 1803 (for the last year's account is not yet delivered), the total of the capital was 588 millions, and the annual interest and charges amounted to 25 millions. Let any man show me, then, if he can, what advantage we derive, or are likely ever to derive, from this sinking fund? What *alleviation of burdens* it produces, or is likely to produce? Does not every one see the clear difference between the American mode of reducing their debt, and our mode? That the former produces a real reduction, and that the latter produces no reduction at all?——"In *time of peace*," some son of credulous hope will exclaim: "it will work "miracles in time of peace!" Not at all; for, supposing us never to make another loan, and suppose peace to come to-morrow, the annual sum to be paid by us in taxes, on account of debt, will remain just as great as it now is, as long as the present pernicious system is persevered in.——But, is it not madness to think of discontinuing to make loans, as long as this system lasts? For this year the army, navy, ordnance and contingencies, are estimated at little short of 40 millions. Does any one believe, that a peace *now made*, by Mr. Pitt or by any body else, would much reduce this annual charge? Was the annual charge much reduced during the last peace? Nay, were not loans made both those years? And was not the annual charge on account of debt *augmented* in the sum of 2 millions and a half? And, is it likely that a peace to diminish much our naval and military expenses can *now* be made? The whole of the annual income of the nation, *war taxes included*, does not now, and will not next year, amount to more than 40 millions. The charge on account of the national debt alone, will never again, as long as the Pitt system lasts, amount to less than 29 millions a year; leaving 11 millions a year for the purpose of defraying the expenses of army, navy, ordnance, and contingencies, which, as was before stated, now amount to 40 millions a year, and which none but a madman, or a fool, can hope to see reduced to a sum less than about 25 millions in time of peace, if peace should be made now. Here, then, even upon the *peace establishment*, are 14 millions a year left to be raised *by loans*; and, observe, that this is supposing that all the present war taxes, as they are termed, will (as they must be) *rendered permanent!* Never, therefore, in peace or in war, can we again expect to see a year pass over our heads without a new loan. What must those persons be, then, who console themselves with the hope of the relief to be derived from the operations of the Sinking Fund; that fund, that very fund, which, on a future occasion, I think I shall be able to prove to be the principal cause of our embarrassments and our dangers!—But, if, upon a supposition that peace should be concluded this year, we are doomed to make annual loans, what have we, as to this point, to expect as the consequences of a six years' longer continuation of the war? Such a continuation would, in all probability, swell the annual charge on account of debt to the amount of 40 millions, and, indeed, to a greater amount; that is to an amount equal to that of the whole present income, war taxes included, leaving the whole of the expenses of the army, navy, &c. &c. to be provided for by loans. Is it possible, I will ask any reasonable man, for the state to exist, for the monarchy to stand, in such a state of things? And, is it, then, not time for men, for public men, for legislators, for ministers, for noblemen, and, above all, for princes, to think of making preparation for the crisis; to consider of *the means* by which the stroke may, when it comes, be prevented from subverting the throne and burying our liberties beneath its ruins?——He who is disposed to smile at these apprehensions, should before he gives too much latitude to his mirth, con-

sider seriously, whether there be, or be not, any foundation for my opinions. He should look attentively at the progress of the annual charge on account of debt; he should compare the present amount of that charge with the annual amount of the national income; he should estimate the probable duration of war, the probable yearly expenses of peace, and the inevitable consequences of continuing to make annual loans in peace as well as in war. He should look into the history of public debts; of currencies depreciated; and should ask himself: what have invariably been the consequences of a state of things, in which all contracts become nugatory, or, are binding only to the destruction of right? When he has duly considered these things, let him reflect on the consequences that might arise from an invasion, an insurrection (even if confined to the capital), from combinations of different descriptions of men, drawn together and pushed on to a desperate course by the injuries arising from the disturbance of prices, occasioned by the increase, and consequent degradation, of the currency. And, let him be well upon his guard against drawing a conclusion favourable to the Sinking Fund, merely because he finds the *theory* of that project good; always remembering, that that which is perfectly true in figures, may be completely false in fact. Upon a point of this sort, Lord Lauderdale, in his admirable work upon Public Wealth, has, in Chapter IV, the following remark: "Lest the reader should "be disposed to think, with the generality "of mankind, that what is true in figures, "and the result of accurate calculation, "must be true in practice, and possible in "execution; he is desired to reflect, that "one penny put out, at our Saviour's birth, "at 5 per centum, compound interest, would "before this time, have increased to a greater sum than could be contained in five "hundred millions of earths, all of solid "gold; and that this is a calculation as *accurate*, and as *true*, as any with which parliament has been furnished in the progress of this delusion." This chapter is upon the sinking fund. Before his Lordship's pen the smoky mists, raised by the Aucklands, the George Roses, the Chalmerses, the Vansittarts, the Sinclairs, and other dabblers in political œconomy, fly in every direction, leaving Mr. Pitt and his project clearly exposed to every man who has common sense and a common degree of discernment.—The *theory* of the Sinking Fund must be considered separately from the practice. In theory it is true that the national debt is in a course of redemption by means of the Sinking Fund; in practice the same proposition is utterly false.——I shall, on the first convenient occasion, return to this important subject; when I intend to give a succinct history of the Sinking Fund, showing, as I proceed, how its purposes, and the opinions of its advocates, have been continually upon the shift. Particularly I shall endeavour to show the fallacy of the argument, which is built upon the acknowledged and undeniable efficacy of a Sinking Fund (founded upon a theory like that of the Public Sinking Fund) *in clearing off the mortgage upon a private estate.* Much of the present deception arises from the want of perceiving the fallacy of this comparison; by removing which, therefore, we shall certainly make an advance towards the truth.

SLAVE TRADE.——The readers of the Register will remember, that, towards the close of the last session of Parliament, Mr. Wilberforce brought into the House of Commons a bill for abolishing this trade. The preamble of the bill stated the slave trade to be "contrary to the principles of justice and "humanity." If the remarks which were made thereon, at the time, should be thought worth recurring to, they will be found in vol. V. p. 933, and in the same volume, p. 1007.—The bill was introduced on the 30th of May, and was finally passed and sent to the Lords on the 27th of June. The several debates will be found in the Parliamentary Debates, vol. II. p. p. 440, 543, 649, 848, and 863, where it will be perceived, that the House divided five several times upon the subject; to wit; on the 30th of May, for the abolition 124, against it 49; on the 7th of June, for 100, against 42; on the 13th of June, for 79, against 20; on the 25th of June, for 52, against 9, on the 27th of June, for 69, against 33. The bill, having reached the House of Lords, their Lordships read it a first time, and postponed the second reading of it for six months. This being the mode usually adopted when it is intended never to read the bill again. Mr. Wilberforce, on the 14th ultimo, brought in another bill, having the same object in view. No opposition to this bill was made till the 28th ultimo, when the second reading was moved for by Mr. Wilberforce, and when general Gascoigne moved an amendment to the motion, for the purpose of putting off the second reading of the bill to that day six months. After a debate of considerable length and of great public interest, the House divided, when there appeared, for the abolition 70, against it 77; and thus, to the astonishment of all those who had only duly reflected on the change which this question

had, even since last year undergone in men's minds, the bill was rejected in the House of Commons, by a majority of 7 members.—— It would be very foolish for the friends of the West India colonies now to lay aside their efforts to prevent the accomplishment of a project like that which has just been defeated; but, for the present, I shall content myself with noticing one argument advanced, upon this occasion, by Mr. Wilberforce. His object evidently was to produce in the minds of his hearers, a conviction, that it was possible, and even easy, to keep up the number of negroes required in the islands by the increase of those already there, and, of course, without any further importation of negroes from Africa. In order to establish this position, he referred to the state of the negro population in the United States of America, where, he said, the negro population had doubled during the last 20 years. One way of oversetting this argument is by denying and disproving the *fact*, upon which it rests. If the reader will refer to the authentic and official statement relative to the population of the United States of America, which he will find in Vol. I. p 236 of this work, he will perceive, that, in the year 1790, when the first Census was taken in the American states, the total of the slave population amounted to 697,697; and that, when the second Census was taken, in the year 1800, the total of the slave population was 876,790; being, in ten years, an increase of 179,093. Twice this latter number is 358,186; and not 697,697, as it ought to be, in order to enable Mr. Wilberforce to maintain his position. There has been no Census taken in America since the year 1800; previous to 1790, there never was any taken. Nothing can be *known*, as to the increase of the population, except what is known from those two Censuses; and, therefore, the conclusion is, that Mr. Wilberforce's assertion, as it is stated in the London newspapers, is *not true*. It may have been falsely reported in the newspapers; and, if not, we are to suppose, of course, that somebody has deceived Mr. Wilberforce; very likely some black preacher, or some white faced preacher with a dark mind; but, at any rate, he will now perceive the error and will, doubtless, be upon his guard against such misrepresentations for the future. My objections, however, to the fact reported to be advanced by Mr. Wilberforce are not confined to what I have already stated. We have seen that the number of slaves in America, during the ten years ending in 1800, rose from 697,697, to 876,790, making, in that ten years, an increase of 179,093; and this, Mr. Wilberforce's printed speech says, *without importation from Africa.* Without any *legally tolerated* importation, if you please; and, indeed, without much importation from *Africa*; but, not so from St. Domingo, whence there were imported into the United States, about 70,000 slaves, between the years when the two Censuses were taken. That many of these had returned to St. Domingo, or had gone to the other West India islands, previous to the taking of the latter Census is true; but, that 30 or 40 thousand remained is certain; and, that they must have assisted in adding to the slave population of 1800 in a degree beyond the number of those who were remaining of the slaves actually imported, no one can, I think, entertain a doubt. If, then, we allow the slave population of America, of 1800, to have received an increase of 50,000 from the importation from St. Domingo, it will follow, that the increase of the American slaves, in the space of ten years, had been only 129,093, upon a former population of 697,697; which is an increase of little more than *one third* in 20 years, instead of that *doubling*, of which Mr. Wilberforce is reported to have spoken.— Having fallen into this account of the American slaves, I cannot refrain from observing, that General Washington, a person usually regarded as a very sincere friend to liberty, did, nevertheless, keep his three hundred blacks and mulattoes in a state of slavery to the day of his death; and, that, even in his will, he made no provision for their being freed, till the death of his wife, an act, towards her, it has been thought, of no very great kindness, to say nothing about the delicacy of it. She, however, appears to have seen the matter in its true light, and, as was reported, in the American papers, lost no time in getting rid of the title of slave-holder, so affectionately bequeathed to her.——Returning to the argument of Mr. Wilberforce, or more properly speaking, perhaps, the argument which the reporters of debates have ascribed to him, I cannot allow, that it ought to have had much weight, had the fact, on which it was founded, been true. It was assumed, that the climate of the American States, is less favourable to the increase of the negro population than the climate of the West Indies is. But, that this was a mere assumption will not, I think be denied by any one who is at all acquainted with the nature of the two climates; and, who happens to know, as I do, that the negroes even in several parts to the north of Bostor, have increased,

and do increase, faster than in any of the more southern latitudes. But, it is to be presumed, that, if Mr. Wilberforce had not spoken last in the debate, some one would have pointed out the wide difference between the West Indies and the American States in the means of affording *subsistence*; for, there are, I imagine, few persons who will deny, that, at last, subsistence is the cause, and that its relative abundance is, therefore, the measure, of the increase of population. The lands in the West Indies are employed, not in the producing of all the subsistence they are capable of producing; but, in the producing of commodities, profitable to the mother country, and expended out of the islands. The lands in America, for the far greater part, are employed in the producing of bread corn. The contrast is, indeed, clearly shown in the short statement of a simple and undeniable fact; to wit; that the West Indians are supplied with a great part of their food out of the *superabundance* of the United States. In this circumstance the reflecting mind clearly discovers the true and only cause of the difference in the state of the negro population in the West Indies and that of the negro population in the United States. Very fallacious, therefore, is that argument, the conclusion of which is, that, because the negroes in the West Indies do not keep up their population without importation, while the negroes of the United States do, those of the West Indies are *worse treated* than those of the United States. It is not that the negroes in the West Indies have not enough to eat; but, it is that there is no food to bestow in that way which tends to increase population. The negroes in the West Indies, like the soldiers in a camp, are compelled to live, in a greater or less degree, in a *state of celibacy*. Their state of life is not favourable to the procreation of children; and, to keep up their numbers, recruits must be brought amongst them; but, does it *thence* follow, that they are ill treated? That they are miserable? That they are deprived of all the comforts of life? that to place them and keep them in such a state is, in the language of the proposed bill, "contrary to the principles "of justice and humanity?" I before appealed to the instance of great cities, particularly London; and, if the slave trade ought to be abolished, because it produces, in itself considered, *a waste of lives*; that is to say, because the deaths, amongst the slaves, exceed the births; if, for this reason, the slave trade ought to be abolished, why does not some abolitionist assert, that London ought to be destroyed, or, at least, to be reduced to a size that would render it as wholesome as a small town? Why are not many trades abolished? For many are to be pointed out, in which the births do not half equal the deaths. How many factories and settlements have we formed, with the full expectation of being obliged to keep up the numbers of their inhabitants by migrations from home? Nay, do we not, I would ask Mr. Wilberforce, persevere in supporting, in this manner, the white population of the terrestrial paradise, commonly called the "British Folly," at Sierra Leone, which to maintain, about 16,000 pounds a year are extracted from *the labour of the people of this country?* Why, then, is the mere circumstance of a decreasing population amongst the West India negroes to be urged as a proof that they are ill-treated, and that further importations of them ought to cease?——Having, as I think, shown, that the premises of the argument ascribed to Mr. Wilberforce are not founded in truth, and, that, if they were, they would warrant the conclusion that was drawn from them, I should, for the present, dismiss the subject, did it not appear proper, and even necessary, to take some notice of a passage, relative thereto, in a late number of the Edinburgh Review. At the close of their review of a pamphlet, entitled, "*A Defence of the Slave Trade*," the Reviewers say: "we cannot but hope, "that this is the *last expiring effort* of an "opposition, which has too long successfully opposed the termination of a traffic, "the continuance of which is the foulest "blot that has ever stained the *character* "and *conscience* of a Christian nation." These gentlemen will now find, that they were deceived; and, if the disappointment should have the effect of checking a little the boldness of their speculations, particularly upon matters connected with politics, there can be scarcely any doubt of its proving greatly advantageous to the reputation of their very able, and, in many respects, excellent work. But, the passage, on which I more immediately had fixed my eye, was the following, relative to the conduct of the House of Lords, in postponing, for the six months, the second reading of the bill sent to their Lordships from the Commons, on the 27th of June last. "As to "the House of Lords, how far their being "less under popular influence, and their "being of a more aristocratical spirit than "the House of Commons, circumstances "which, generally speaking, are productive of practical benefit in a constitution-

" al view, are likewise beneficial in the " present instance, is a point on which we " will deliver no opinion. Happily, such " questions as that of the abolition of the " slave trade rarely occur. Legislatures " are not constructed with a view to their " determination; and, if the *peculiar con-* " *stitution and temper* of the House of Lords " should operate unfavourably on this great " question, however we might regret the " circumstance, we should be very *slow* in " drawing any inferences *concerning the* " *general utility of that body.*"—Wonderful forbearance! They shall be *slow* (and this they say while the bill is before the Lords) in declaring the House of Lords *quite useless*, even though it should not pass Mr. Wilberforce's bill! But, why should we be surprized? Is not this the spirit, the intolerant spirit, by which the most busy of the abolitionists have been actuated, and which has been apparent in all their conduct, from the time the question of abolition was first agitated to the present hour? They always assume, as a truth universally admitted, that their opponents are men actuated by the most selfish motives; men destitute of every feeling of humanity and of every sentiment of religion, deaf to all the admonitions of conscience, and, in short, animated by a soul, which they have sold to the devil. Such seems to be the opinion of a person, who has lately written to me, through the hands of a common friend; but, without giving me permission to publish his letter. This gentleman bids me bow down before the *disinterested* perseverance of Mr. Wilberforce. I do not know that Mr. Wilberforce is not disinterested; nor do I think it very difficult for any man to make a great display of disinterestedness with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand a year. But, as to the question of the slave trade, I will venture to assert, that neither Mr. Wilberforce nor his officious supporter can produce a single shadow of proof, to justify the insinuation, that *I am not disinterested.* I have no private interest whatever to answer by the continuation of the slave trade; I am neither related to nor connected with, either directly or indirectly, any person having a private interest in that traffic; nay, though, since I have duly considered the question, I have always been an advocate for the continuation of the slave trade, I never have, till very lately, been personally acquainted with any one West-India planter or merchant. The conduct, which I have, in this respect, pursued, has proceeded from a sincere conviction, that the sum of human misery is rather lessened than augmented by the slave trade; and, that the abolition of that trade would prove greatly injurious to my country. Insinuations, like that above alluded to, I, therefore, despise; and, the infliction of that *eternal wrath*, with which the modest insinuator is pleased to menace me, I am happy to reflect is lodged in other hands than his. This gentleman says, that, after the most mature consideration, he is convinced of the iniquity of the slave trade, and that it ought to be abolished. He talks incessantly of his conscience, and, vows that, " so help him God," such and such are his opinions. And, does he think, that nobody has a conscience as well as he? And, what opinion, or expression of mine either public or private, could have emboldened him to call the army " the *God* of *my* adoration?" But, as was before observed, this is their constant practice. This is the way, in which they have invariably treated their opponents. The publications, which they have made against the planters of Jamaica, would have cost them their ears, cropped off a hair's breadth at a time, if made against any other class of their fellow subjects. Upon the score of *disinterestedness* I will, at any time, venture on a comparison, with this gentleman, be he who he may, or with his friend, Mr. Wilberforce. I have *no* purpose in view but the good of my country. I have *nobody* to please; *nobody* to humour; I am under no promises; my hands are as clean as Mr. Wilberforce's; I never touched the public money myself nor did I ever enable, or endeavour to enable, or wish to enable, any other person to touch it, or to keep it; I am under no influence but that of my own mind; I hunt after neither pelf nor praise; I wish to see my name inscribed neither in the Court Calendar nor in the Calendar of canting Saints. When this vehement monitor of mine shall find that time, for which he seems to wish, for the purpose of entering at large upon the subject of the slave trade, I would recommend him to begin his labour (and no trifling labour it will prove) by answering a pamphlet, published in 1790, entitled, " Doubts on the Abolition of the Slave " Trade, by an old member of parliament," which never has yet been answered, except by frothy declamation and violent abuse. Upon this pamphlet the Edinburgh reviewers observe, that it is the best they have ever read in defence of the slave trade. They do not attempt to answer it; but, with that sort of candour which has always marked the conduct of the writers on their side of the question, they insinuate

that the author has assumed a false character, and that he is a mere writer by trade; which insinuation I assert to be utterly groundless. The character assumed was a true one; the author was, and is, an English gentleman perfectly independent, entirely unconnected with the slave trade, with the West-India colonies, with trade of all sorts, and, the pamphlet was the result of the reading and inquiries of a whole year of his life, set apart to those purposes. I may, perhaps, shortly be at liberty to mention his name to the public; but, in the mean-time, I cannot help expressing a hope, that, through some means or other, a new and cheap edition of his valuable work will find its way into extensive circulation. —— Having already trespassed upon the patience of the reader beyond the hope of forgiveness, I will trespass a little further, in order to request him to bear in mind, what is the description of persons, what is the sect, or rather, what are the sects, by whom the nation are led in their outcry against the slave trade and the West-India planters: the *Quakers* and the *Methodists:* these are the godly crews, on whose sleeves the people, in this case, have pinned their faith and their consciences. Observe, too, that it is only the *modern* Quakers, who have been moved by the spirit of negro-loving. Their ancestors both bought and sold negroes in Pennsylvania; and, yet they are so inconsistent as to revere the memory, and to applaud (most justly) the statutes of the founder of that once happy province; yea, a thousand thousand times more happy and more virtuous than it now is, under the sway of those who have abolished negro-slavery, and who, for the far greater part, have exchanged the real piety of their forefathers for a despicable cant. The crack-brained Benezet, and Warner Mifflin, surnamed, in his country, THE HYPOCRITE, by way of eminence, were the beginners of this series of disputes. Their successors amongst us are well known; and yet, upon the subject of the slave trade, we have the mortification to see no small portion of the people following the heels of the two sects above-mentioned, one of which makes it an article of its creed to resist the lawful demands, the just, the immemorial rights, of the Church; while the other is incessantly reviling her clergy and dishonouring her service. And, shall I, and all those who entertain the same sentiments, because we will not fall into the ranks; because we will not swell the motley cavalcade, of which the chiefs of these new-fangled mongrel sects are at the head, be stigmatized as reprobates; as men void of all religion, morality, and feeling? Shall we silently submit, to be told that we are not Christians, and to be threatened with perdition, because we refuse to become followers of Benezet and Warner Mifflin? Barefaced abuse one might meet with a smile; but, the cool impudence, with which these pretenders to exclusive piety preface their arguments with the axiom, that all those are damned who do not subscribe to their opinions; this it is that calls forth indignation, and, where it is possible, punishment. To themselves alone it is, that the leaders of the abolitionists have to ascribe the imputations of cant and hypocrisy. They have constantly been the aggressors. They began with their inflammatory charges of impiety and cruelty; and aggression, except amongst souls too base to feel, never fails to be met with an attempt, at least, at punishment. *Selfishness* has been the standing charge. Just as if it were a proof of selfishness for men to endeavour to preserve their property and defend their character! What a shameful perversion of the meaning of words! What an outrageous assault on the common sense of mankind!——Here I put an end to these remarks, with the expression of a hope, that, now that the *House of Commons* have stopped the progress of the abolition bill, that the Edinburgh Reviewers will coolly revise their opinions, and, in future, check any disposition they may entertain to question *the general utility* of the other branch of the legislature. I do hope, that, while these gentlemen scruple not to applaud the system of government, by which the parish paupers in England have been swelled in number to more than a million; while, without a murmur, they behold the parish officers of Wales disposing of the rates in shipping off their poor to slavery in America; while they pass in silence over all the imprisonments, the beatings, the whippings, the tortures, the hangings, the mock-legal murders, that are inflicted on the white slaves in certain parts of Europe: yes, I do hope, that, while the Edinburgh Reviewers can see all this with such perfect *sang froid*, they will, though the slave trade should not be abolished, be very "slow" indeed in throwing out hints for *abolishing the parliament!*

TRINIDAD.——A proposition is, it is said, to be submitted to parliament for preventing any further importation of slaves into the island of Trinidad, a proposition, of which, I think, every one must readily ap-

prove. This is a question not at all connected with that of the slave trade generally; and still less with the question of the slave trade now carried on to our old colonies. It is a question, whether it be, or be not, good policy to prevent the further spreading of British capital over colonies in the West-Indies; and, the opinion entertained by the best informed men, is, that our old colonies, well kept up, are quite sufficient for us. Indeed, it seems like downright madness to begin settling another large island in the West-Indies, while we are driven to such miserable and disgraceful expedients as we now are to furnish a force, sufficient merely to preserve tranquillity, in the islands which we already have. To retake the Dutch colonies was proper enough, though of very little importance as to the great object of the war. We had scarcely evacuated those colonies: the colonists were British in heart, and not a few of them by birth: the capital was almost exclusively British: were it only for the sake of affording these persons an opportunity of sending home their property, or of disposing of it upon better terms at another peace, it was right to take possession of the Dutch colonies. But, as to Trinidad, it is, as yet, a wilderness. Before it can possibly defray its own internal expenses, it will have cost us half a million, to be extracted from English labour; and, what is of still more importance, it will have cost the lives of several thousands of British soldiers and sailors, employed for its protection, internal and external. For these reasons, it is to be hoped, that the above-mentioned proposition will be carried. Trinidad is perfectly useless to this kingdom; a dead charge; and, therefore, ought, as soon as possible, to be got rid of. The possession of it conduces not, in the smallest degree, to the safety of our old colonies. Its ports never were of much service to our enemies; and, the truth is, that it was obtained at the peace, merely for the purpose of making a show; merely that the ministers might have something to tell the people that they had gained for them; something to keep in countenance, just to save from hiding his head, that lofty-toned minister, who had so often and so pompously promised them "*indemnity* for "the past and *security* for the future." Having answered this useful purpose, the island may now, I think, be, with great advantage, evacuated, first destroying the fortifications and public buildings: or, at least, it will be wise to give it up at the peace, though, in the estimate of objects of exchange, it certainly would not reckon for much. At any rate, it would be unwise to suffer, and even encourage, British capital to be expended upon it; and, to prevent such expenditure, the parliament has only to pass (as I trust they will pass) a law to prevent the further importation of slaves into it.

ANTIGUA.——From the proclamation of the governor of this island, which proclamation will be found in a preceding page of the present sheet, it appears, that the intercourse between Antigua and the United States of America is *not* menaced with that interruption, the consequences of which, were, when the last advices came away, hanging over the head of Jamaica. It seems strange, however, that Mr. Nugent, the Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica, should have received orders from Lord Camden, different from those sent out by his Lordship to the Governor of Antigua.——Be this as it may, the public will be very glad to hear, that, if the ministers have not *disavowed* the measure adopted by Governor Nugent, they do not intend to *persevere* in it; and that orders are, by this time, probably, gone out for the rescinding of the resolution of council issued in Jamaica on the 21st of November last; for which see the present Volume, p. 208. But, the ministers and the persons they employ should recollect, that the giving of a plaister does not make compensation for a broken head. It is true, that the counter order will reach Jamaica before the expiration of the time mentioned in the resolution of council; but, when will the intelligence of this counter-order reach the United States of America? For, observe, that, officially, it cannot reach America except through Jamaica. A notification may, indeed, be made through the American papers much sooner; but, even that can scarcely be done before the middle of April, leaving but a very short space of time for the purpose of counteracting the effects of the resolution of council. So that, as the least probable evil arising from this precipitate measure, we may be sure that provisions will be, for a time, less abundantly furnished to Jamaica from the United States; that they will, of course, be dearer than they would have been; that this will add to the expenses of some planters, and will decrease the subsistence for the slaves of others.

NAVAL INQUIRY.——The reader will remember, that a board of Commissioners, at the head of which was Admiral Sir Charles Pole, was established, by act of Parliament, in December, 1802, for the purpose of inquiry into the abuses in the

several departments of the navy, and of reporting to parliament the result of such their inquiries. That this board has made nine different reports, the public have already been informed in the account of the proceedings in parliament. These reports all exhibit ample proofs of the necessity of such an inquiry; they discover most shameful scenes of peculation; and, the tenth is not expected to be less interesting in this way than the former ones. Much of the business of this board remains to be done; and, therefore, as the commission, if not renewed, will, of itself, expire at the end of the present session of parliament, a motion was, on the 1st instant made, in the House of Commons, by Mr. Giles, for leave to bring in a bill to continue, beyond the duration of the present session of parliament, the act appointing commissioners for Naval Inquiry. This motion was resisted by Mr. Pitt, who thereupon moved the order of the day; and, upon a division of the House, the motion of Mr. Giles was lost, there being, for the motion 75, and against it, 92, leaving a majority in favour of the ministry of 17.——Mr. Pitt said, that he by no means meant to propose to the House, *not* to continue the act, if its continuation *should be necessary*; but, that he did not think it necessary to vote its continuance before any occasion for that measure should appear. He did not hesitate to say, that the reports of the commissioners had been attended with much benefit, neither had he any difficulty in declaring, that, if there was not sufficient time before the close of the session to terminate the investigation referred to them, their powers should be further continued. But it did not now appear that the remainder of the session would *not afford* sufficient time. On the review taken by the hon. and learned gentleman himself of the subjects proposed for inquiry, only one of any great importance remained uninvestigated, that was the victualling department; the transport department and the others were of inferior importance. He saw no reason, however, to suppose that the commissioners might not be prepared to make their report of the Victualling Office now, nor that they had not at intervals turned their attention to the other remaining subjects of inquiry, on which no report had yet been made, in such a manner as to leave little to be done to make up what they would submit to the House respecting them. He thought it right, therefore, to wait till a more advanced period of the session, and then *if it should be necessary*, he should have no objection to the continuance. The Addington's being called upon to support their own measure, Mr. Bragge, though he seemed not very well pleased to be compelled to speak, declared that his vote for the previous question would be grounded upon his firm reliance upon the promise of Mr. Pitt, that, if all the objects of inquiry had not been gone through, at the end of the session, the commission should be continued, till they were all gone through. Mr. Canning, the successor of Mr. Tierney, in the Treasurership of the Navy (*once* held by Mr. Dundas); Mr. Canning reserved to himself some other grounds of objection. First, it was with him a question, whether it would be necessary to renew the bill at all. Secondly, whether, if renewed, the *powers* of the commissioners ought to be so *great* as they *now are*. And, thirdly, whether, in any case, the inquiries of the commissioners ought to be continued *during war*.——As to the *extent* of the *powers* of the commissioners, that appears to have been quite sufficiently circumscribed, for every good purpose, by the alterations, which were introduced into the bill by the Lord Chancellor, who, being, as all the world must, by this time, have heard, a person uncommonly conscientious, would certainly have left nothing in the bill likely to produce an assault upon the consciences of other men. The extent of the commissioners' powers having, therefore, undergone such an examination, previous to their being granted by parliament, it is rather surprising that we should hear doubts started as to the propriety of renewing them to the same extent. The noble lord, beforementioned, took great and laudable pains (as was noticed at the time, in this work) to provide a shield against the committing of wrong, against the forcing of a man to say what would *criminate himself*; and, what more is wanted? I think I have read a poetical moralist, who treats with the utmost ridicule and contempt that candour, which shows itself in tenderness towards "poor suffering *Guilt*."

> "Barras loves *plunder*; Mulin takes a *bribe*,
> "What then? shall *candour* these good men proscribe?
> "No! ere we join the loud-accusing throng,
> "Prove,—not the *facts*,—but, that *they thought them wrong*.

I do not approve of this "NEW MO-"RALITY," whether inculcated in verse, or in prose, and can by no means agree, that the mere *names* or *nation* of the guilty make any difference at all as to what ought to be the decision of mankind upon their actions.——With respect to the pre-

priety of continuing the inquiries of the commissioners *during war*, doubts were at first expressed upon that point. The bill was introduced with a declaration, on the part of the then ministry, that Lord Spencer had always had the intention of instituting such a commission; but that his lordship very prudently determined to postpone it, till a time of peace, lest the public service should experience a temporary interruption, or, at least, inconvenience, from the inquiries that it would be necessary to make, and from the measures consequent thereon. Upon the ground of this declaration Lord Folkestone, moved to postpone the passing of the bill, till after the Christmas recess (of 1802), being of opinion, that the House would soon be convinced, that, before the commissioners could scarcely be assembled, the nation would be called upon to begin making extensive preparations for war; and, every one must recollect, that the Parliament actually received the King's message for the calling out of the militia in about eleven weeks from the time, that this motion of Lord Folkestone's was made. In the debate upon Mr. Giles's motion, Captain Markham, the person by whom the bill was brought in, unequivocally declared, that it never was the wish of the late ministry to establish the board in time of war; but, he observed, and very truly, that all the inconvenience which could arise to the public service from the operation of the commission was now known; it had already arisen, and, that, therefore, the service would now go on without any chance of impediment from the inquiries of the commissioners.——Here it is necessary to recur, for a moment, to the memorable Addingtonian pamphlet, by the "NEAR OBSERVER," who, in describing the conduct of Lords Spencer, Grenville, and Carlisle, says: "Every species of despon- "dency was again carefully spread amongst "the people. The finances were decried, and "the statements of the Chancellor of the "Exchequer *disputed*." [They have since been *proved* to have been *false*.] "Even "the *resources* of the country were *attacked*." [This is always the accusation against every one, who exposes the falsehood of a minister's statements.] "The conduct of "the government was arraigned in all "its foreign intercourse, and the crimes "of Buonaparté preposterously transfer- "red to Mr. Addington. The Admiralty "was reviled and calumniated, and those "just and salutary reforms in the dock- "yards, which will carry down the "victorious name of St. Vincent to pos- "terity, with every character of public "virtue and devotion, *were represented* "*as cruel persecutions*. The insurrection of "jobbers in the dock-yards was *abetted and* "*defended*, and the rebellion of boards and "departments encouraged and promoted." Now, who would not imagine, that the three noblemen last named, were at the head of these calumniators of the admiralty? Who, (that knew nothing of them nor of this writer) would not naturally suppose, that they took the lead in these troops of abettors and defenders of the jobbers and peculators in the dock-yards? The truth is, however, that, not one syllable did either of them ever utter, at least in parliament, against the establishing of that commission, for which Lord St. Vincent was so much, and, I allow it, so justly extolled; and, except from *persons now acting with the Addingtons*, now closely leagued with them in power and emolument; except from persons of this description, no opposition to the commission of inquiry was made, upon any other ground than that of *time*; the ground upon which solely alone Lord Folkestone's motion was founded, and which ground has now, even by the framers and supporters of the bill, been acknowledged to have been good ground. But, the most important point yet remains to be touched; which is, that we now find the Addingtons joining Mr. Canning and the other partisans of Lord Melville and Mr. Pitt in voting against the motion of Mr. Giles! It would be curious to hear what the NEAR OBSERVER could say to this! Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville and Mr. Canning he would, perhaps, care little about; but, surely, he would spill a little ink for the purpose of endeavouring to defend the consistency of the Addingtons!

TAX ON SALT.——The bill imposing an additional duty upon salt was, on the 4th instant opposed, in the House of Commons, upon a motion of Lord William Russell, who, as an amendment to the motion of Mr. Pitt, that the bill be now read a second time, moved, that the bill be read a second time this day six months. The House having divided upon his lordship's motion, there appeared for it 60, against it 92, leaving a majority of 32 in favour of the ministry and of the tax.——His lordship said, that this tax would materially affect the labouring classes of the community, the protection of whom he was sorry to say, the right hon. gentleman seemed to have abandoned; that he had been in hopes that the report of the committee on this subject would have sufficiently shewn the inconvenience and op-

pression of the tax; that he now hoped that those who urged the institution of that committee, and who had approved of their resolutions, would come forward, and he trusted that as they had recommended the repeal of the original duty, and the consequent removal of all impediments to the free circulation of salt, they could not with any pretensions to consistency agree to lay additional imposts on that article, which would still more impede its circulation; that the immediate effect of this bill would be to raise the assize of bread; and that the price of all kinds of butchers' meat would necessarily be increased, and salt fish, which was the chief diet of many of the poor, would likewise become more expensive. ——Mr. Pitt said, that the committee, in the report which they gave in some years ago, and which had been alluded to by the noble lord, proceeded on the ground of rendering salt applicable to many general purposes, among which was even that of manure; it was certainly their object to give facility to the circulation of that article, but the chief hindrance to a free circulation was the regulation which the duty necessarily demanded, and these regulations would equally affect the circulation, whether the duty amounted to five, ten, or fifteen shillings a bushel, so that the noble lord ought not to be satisfied with advising a rejection of a revenue of 500,000l. which the proposed additional duty would produce, but should proceed to advise the taking off the duty now existing, which produced a revenue amounting to double that sum; that it was singular that the noble lord should call on those persons, who, when the country was at peace, approved the report of the committee, and yet did not venture to institute any measure upon it, to come forward, and, in the midst of war, declare their opinion on the present bill; that the report had slept for three years, and the consideration of it was now urged, at a time, than which, none could be more unfit; that it was a most unpleasant thing for him to be under the necessity of imposing taxes, which, in any degree, affected the lower classes, but *he had a sacred duty to perform*; that we were engaged in a contest for the defence both of rich and of poor; that supplies *must be found*, and no mode of raising them seemed to him so little liable to objection as the present; that on the day when he first introduced this and his other measures of finance, it was objected by an hon. gentleman, that they did not fall sufficiently on articles of consumption; that the noble lord had not been just in saying, that government had abandoned the interests of the lower classes; that he ought to look at the taxes from the year 1793 to the present time, and he would find that the poor had been *in every instance exonerated at the expense of their superiors*; the Income Tax, the wine duty, the duty on foreign spirits, and a variety of others, sufficiently proved this; that the sum estimated as likely to be raised from this additional duty on salt, was 500,000 l. at 5s. per bushel, and therefore proceeded on a calculation of two millions of bushels being consumed; that there were eleven millions of consumers, and it must be obvious to the House, how much greater a proportion of this tax would fall on the higher classes than on the lower; that, on a fair calculation, the consumption of a cottage containing a family of five persons, would be considerably short of a bushel in the year, making an annual duty of only three or four shillings, and this it should be recollected, collected gradually from week to week, so that its influence would scarcely be felt; that taxes on consumption to be productive, must be laid on articles of general consumption; that as to the apprehended increase in the assize of bread, it never varied, unless a fluctuation of at least 1s. 8d. took place on each sack of flour, and the quantity of salt used in this case was so small, it was such a trifling fraction, that it could not possibly affect the price; he hoped, therefore, however specious the arguments used by the opponents of the measure, however they might affect to be the advocates and protectors of the poor, that the House would see through the fallacy of their objections; and that, in the support of a cause, in which the higher and the lower classes were equally concerned, they would not hesitate to afford to his Majesty's government those means which were proved by them to be the *least objectionable*.—He did not say, nor did he affect to say, that the tax was *not* objectionable. He has no scruple to propose, and to carry, an objectionable tax. It is quite sufficient for him, while his opponents refrain from making war upon his whole system, to have to say, that nobody can propose taxes *less* objectionable than those which he proposes. "It is an unpleasant thing to me," says he, "to impose taxes, which, in any degree, "affect the lower classes; but, *I have a* "*sacred duty to perform*; supplies *must be* "*found*;" or, what? Why the interest of the national debt cannot be paid; the commissioners of the sinking fund cannot go twice a week into the stock market; and the paper system must be destroyed! Aye,

there's the rub! That argument is, with all those who hold that that system ought to be supported, absolutely unanswerable. Merely as a question of choice of taxes; if that is all the House of Commons has, at last, the inclination, or the power, to settle, their functions lie in a very narrow compass; and, in that view of the matter, I am, for the reasons that were stated in page 299 of the present volume, convinced, that the tax on salt is as unobjectionable an one as can now be found out. Taxes on consumption are best, because the burden is so fairly distributed; and, the best articles are those, which are in the most general use, and come nearest to the absolute necessaries of life; because no tax upon such articles can possibly diminish the general consumption. The tax on draught horses is better than the tax upon pleasure horses, because its weight, pressing more immediately upon articles of general consumption, is more rapid in its course into general diffusion; and, for that reason, produces none of those sudden changes of property, none of those new domestic arrangements, none of those disturbances in the affairs of masters and servants; none of those partial vexations, inconveniences, and losses, which must inevitably be produced, in a greater or less degree, by the tax upon pleasure horses. And, as to the relative weight upon the *poor*, in order to be satisfied, that a tax upon the necessaries of life has in it no hardship peculiar to them, we have only to keep in mind, this great and immutable principle, that on *labour*, and on *labour alone*, all taxes, of whatever description, must finally fall; because, there is no species of property, which does not, and which must not, proceed from labour.—— In stating the grounds of my opinion thus confidently, I beg leave to be understood, as having omitted the qualifying phrases, which it would have become me to use, merely for the sake of avoiding the encumbrance, which would therefrom have arisen to the statement. If any one, who may think me in error, will take the trouble to put me right, I shall gladly receive, and give place to his communication.——But, this opinion of mine is built upon a principle widely different from that, on which Mr. Pitt thought proper to defend the salt-duty. He, in fact, took his opponents upon their own ground. He acknowledged that it was a tax upon the poor; or, rather he acknowledged, that there were two sorts of taxes, one that *weighed upon the poor*, and one that *weighed upon the rich*. And, it *grieved* him, he said, whenever he was compelled to resort to taxes of the former description! But, said he, in order to be convinced, that my taxes have not, for the far greater part, been such; in order to be convinced, that, ever since the year 1793, "the poor have been exonerated at the *expense of the rich*," look at the tax on *Income*, on *Wine*, on *Carriages*, &c. &c.! Just as if all these taxes did not finally fall upon the poor as well as upon the rich! Upon such occasions, it is truly surprizing, that he is never reminded by any one, that, during the operation of this system of *exonerating* the poor at the expense of the rich, the number of paupers in the kingdom has nearly doubled; very nearly doubled since the year 1786. If such be the effect of *exonerating* the poor, it would be adviseable to try, for a while, the effect of exonerating the rich.——There is another view of this subject which must not be omitted. The ministerial writers, impatient under the effect, which they, or rather their employers, perceive the divisions upon the salt-tax bill to have produced, are endeavouring to represent its opponents as men, who are perfectly indifferent to the safety of the country, and who would, indeed, rejoice at seeing it conquered. The SUN, of the 5th instant, has the following paragraph upon the subject: "We are surprised to find opposition "*hazarding their political credit* by attempting to excite a general prejudice against "the proposed addition to the tax upon "salt. The argument they use upon this "subject, if argument it can be called, is, "that the taxes will chiefly fall upon the "poor.—This is, in fact, a mere assertion, "for it is a tax very light in itself, and one "that will have an operation upon the "whole of the community. It will fall "heavy upon none, and in a very short "time it will hardly be felt at all. But, it "is evident, by the clamour which the opponents of government make on this "point, that they have no substantial plea "to urge against any of the general measures of administration, or against the "rest of the taxes devised for supporting the unavoidable burthens of the state. "It never can be supposed that these opponents of government have *a proper idea* "*of the danger that threatens the country* "from the designs of an ambitious, rancorous, and unappeaseable enemy; an "enemy whose sole and avowed object is "to annihilate us wholly as an independent state. When we find some among "the adversaries of government doing all

" they can to ridicule the volunteer service, and *consequently* to excite the hopes " of the enemy, in making him believe that " we shall fall an easy prey to his veteran " and experienced hordes of ruffians, if " they could once effect a landing; and " when we find that others endeavour, with " equal zeal, to bring *odium upon our internal* " *resources* for guarding against the me- " naced evil, what must be thought of " their pretensions to *patriotism!* It must " really excite astonishment to find, that " men of acknowledged talents can *calmly* " *look at the countries under French domina-* " *tion*, and yet make such petty and per- " severing cavils against measures *calcu-* " *lated to avert such a dreadful fate from their* " *own*, measures that are *dictated by wis-* " *dom*, and that are *founded in moderation*, " and a *due regard to the weight which al-* " *ready presses upon the people*."——This is their way: their uniform practice! They always assume, as premises admitted, all those facts which their opponents deny. The opposers of the salt tax deny that it is calculated to promote the interests and security of the country, but, on the contrary, argue, that it is calculated to do great public injury, to oppress the lower orders of the people, and thereby to render them discontented, and, of course, less likely to be zealous in the defence of the country. They deny that the tax is dictated by wisdom. They deny that it is founded in moderation. They deny that the imposers of this tax have had a due regard to the weight of the burdens which already press upon the people. All this they deny; this denial is the very foundation of their opposition; and, yet these writers have the assurance to draw their conclusion, just as if it had all been *admitted* instead of denied; and as if, therefore, one was compelled to seek, in disaffection and disloyalty, for a reason for their opposition!——Upon such occasions the *dangers of the country* are always mustered, and dressed out with a suitable number of terrific epithets. That the dangers of the country are great, I want nothing to convince me; but, it would take much to convince me, that those dangers are to be diminished by adding to the weight of the people's burdens; and, in exemplification of my meaning, I will, by way of compliment to the " young friend" who writes in the SUN, borrow an illustration from the conduct of an animal, to which he may, I think, fairly be presumed to bear some affinity. " An old fellow," says Æsop, " was feeding an ass in a meadow; and, " being alarmed with the sudden approach " of the enemy, was impatient with the ass " to put himself forward, and fly with all the " speed that he was able. The ass asked " him, whether or no he thought the enemy " would clap *two pair* of such panniers upon " his back. The man said, no, there was " no fear of that. Why, then, says the " ass, I will not stir an inch; for, what is it " to me who my master is, since I shall but " carry my panniers as usual?"

MIDDLESEX ELECTION.——I heartily congratulate the public in general, and particularly the people of the county of Middlesex, that, by the decision of a committee of the House of Commons, Sir Francis Burdett is placed in the seat, from which he has been, during the present session, so illegally and unjustly kept. During the whole of the last election Sir Francis Burdett's conduct was such as no independent man could disapprove of. At the close of that election, it was such as, all the circumstances considered, is, as to *moderation*, without a parallel in the history of public and popular men. In my next, I shall submit some remarks upon the several branches of this very important subject; and, in the mean time shall content myself with just expressing my feeling upon the occasion; which is that of sincere satisfaction, arising from the reflection, that, as an inhabitant of Middlesex, I am now represented in parliament by a *Gentleman*; a man of ancient family, hereditary rank and possessions, of great talents, and of perfect independence of mind.

THE IRISH CATHOLIC deputation have arrived in London, and have brought a petition to the parliament for the redress of their grievances. But, this petition, it is said, after having been submitted to the ministers, is to be *laid upon the table*, without any proceedings thereon being urged, at least, by the deputation, unless the ministers choose it; and, that they will not choose it, we can want very little to satisfy us, when we recollect what are the sentiments of the Prime Minister, Lord Sidmouth. In what degree the members of this deputation can properly be regarded as the *representatives* of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, I know not; but, the course they are said to have taken, though it may, for reasons too obvious to mention, prove very satisfactory to themselves, does not appear likely to procure any relief to that numerous body, whose discontents form, at this moment, the ground of our most serious apprehensions and dangers.

Printed by Cox and Baylis, No 75, Great Queen Street, and published by R. Bagshaw, Bow Street, Covent Garden, where former Numbers may be had; sold also by J. Budd, Crown and Mitre, Pall-Mall.